

# Environmental

## Quick Reference

Cutting through the jargon



### Some Basic Environmental Definitions...

**Environmental Aspect:** Is any aspect of an organisation's activities, products or services that can interact with the environment

**Non hazardous Waste:** Waste which does not feature on the list of hazardous wastes EWC 2002. For offices this includes paper, cardboard, plastic

**Hazardous/Special Waste:** Wastes that possess one or more of the 14 hazardous properties in the Hazardous Waste Directive. For offices this includes computers, fluorescent tubes, fridges

**Waste Transfer Note:** Form required to accompany all loads of inert/non hazardous waste removed from site from point of production to point of final disposal (EF 012.2)

**Waste Consignment Note:** Form required to accompany all loads of hazardous/ special waste removed from site from point of production to point of final disposal (EF 012.3)

**ODS and F-gas:** Group of chemicals (HCFCs and HFCs) that cause significant harm to the environment by damaging the ozone layer and contributing to global warming

### References...

**Netregs Guidance:** [www.netregs.gov.uk](http://www.netregs.gov.uk)

## Ensuring Legal Compliance in our UK offices...

Environmental Legislation provides a cornerstone for protecting the environment from harm; as an organisation we have a legal and moral duty to comply with applicable laws and regulations. While our knowledge of the consequences of polluting releases has developed, so too has the legislation that seeks to control those actions that give rise to them. This article explains the environmental risks to our business from our office activities and how through the effective use of our Environmental Management System we can manage regulatory compliance and improve our environmental performance.

*Fiona Moores: Environmental Advisor (E-A)*

*"Environmental laws and regulations provide a cornerstone for protecting the environment from harm; without them it would be in a much poorer state" (IEMA, 2005)*

### IDENTIFYING APPLICABLE LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The first step in managing compliance with environmental legal requirements is to know which requirements are applicable to our activities, products and services. All services provided by the company are examined to identify the possible and actual impacts on the environment and detailed on our aspects and impacts register (EF 005.1). Legal requirements are assessed and detailed in EF 004.1 Legal and Other Requirements.

In our offices waste production and the use of air conditioning carry the highest environmental risk both in terms of legal compliance and the continuation of our management system certification to ISO 14001.

### WHAT THE REGULATIONS SAY

#### Office Waste Management

The Environmental Protection (Duty of Care) Regulations 1991 and Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011:

Any business that produces waste has a responsibility to ensure that the waste is produced, stored, transported and disposed of without harming the environment. This is called your **duty of care**.

The duty of care has no time limit and reasonable measures should be taken to ensure that waste is not disposed of illegally. The waste hierarchy must also be followed, this means that waste should be reduced and re-use, recycling and recovery options considered.

#### Office Refrigeration and Air Conditioning (RAC) F-gas Regulation and EC Ozone Regulation

A business that owns or operates equipment that contains Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) or F-gases, such as air-conditioning or refrigeration, will need to manage equipment to prevent pollution to the environment.

The use of virgin HCFCs e.g. R22 (ODS) for servicing and maintaining existing RAC equipment is banned; only reclaimed and recycled HCFCs may be used. These are only permitted until 1st January 2015.

### WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE

The duty of care applies to our office waste – this is classed as controlled waste. MWH follow procedure EP 012 Office Waste Management to ensure that our waste is managed legally and effectively. This includes a requirement to complete the Waste Inventory (EF 012.1 held on the Environmental Champions Teamsite). MWH's legal duties include:

- Storing waste safely and securely in clearly labelled containers
- Identifying and describing the controlled waste on the Waste Transfer Note or Consignment Note for hazardous waste
- Transferring the waste to an authorised waste carrier
- Ensuring the waste management facility is licenced/ permitted to accept the waste
- Applying the waste hierarchy when transferring waste
- Pre-treating waste by segregating

MWH maintains Procedure EP 009 Office Refrigeration and Air Conditioning (RAC) which details MWH's duties with regards to managing our RAC systems. These include ensuring:

- Reasonable measures have been taken to prevent leakage
- Leak testing is carried out at least annually.
- Records for systems with 3kg or more of F-gas/ODS refrigerant are maintained
- Refrigerants are recovered during maintenance and plant decommissioning
- Adequately qualified personnel are used for leak testing and maintenance activities
- The company used for maintenance holds a company certificate
- Phase out of HCFCs (ODS) are planned for as applicable

### ENSURING COMPLIANCE Audits

Office Waste and RAC Management is checked through internal office audits and externally through the SGS ISO 14001 audits.

### Training

The 'Managing Offices Sustainably' training is available through Learning and Development and provides delegates with the ability to manage waste and air conditioning legally and effectively.